REMARKS

Claims 17,18 and 22-23 are pending in the present Application. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 17, 18 and 22-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly unpatentable over United States Patent No. 4,760,118 to White et al (White) in view of United States Publication No.2003/0130403 to Geprags et al (Geprags), United States Patent No's 6,872,777 to Adedeji et al (Adedeji) and/or 4,654,405 to Jalbert et al (Jalbert). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In making the rejection the Examiner has asserted that that it would have been obvious to add the additive components taught by Geprags, Adedeji and/or Jalbert simultaneously in the melt-capping process taught in Example 4 of White in order to improve properties. The Examiner also notes that White teaches having polystyrene present during the melt blending of the capping agent and poly(arylene ether).

Applicant respectfully asserts that the subject matter of the pending claims shows unexpectedly superior results over the combination of elements taught by White. Example 8 of the pending application is a comparative example which employs poly(arylene ether) (PPO), high impact polystyrene (HIPS) and polysalicylate – essentially equivalent to the method of Example 4 of White and including polystyrene. Example 10 is highly similar to Example 8 with the exception that the HIPS has been replaced, in part, by an impact modifier. Example 10 retains all of its tensile strength after aging where Example 8 (the comparative one) shows a marked decrease in tensile strength after aging, particularly at 140°C (a decrease of about 42%). Thus the composition made by the method of the pending claims shows unexpectedly better properties than the composition made by the method suggested by White.

Also important to evaluating the unexpected results is a comparison of Examples 1 and 2 as well as a comparison of Examples 7 and 8. Examples 1 and 2 show that a capped poly(arylene ether) retains tensile strength after heat aging whereas an uncapped poly(arylene ether) does not. However, these results appear to depend on both the type of poly(arylene ether) (PPO I vs. PPO II) and the absence of additional components like the HIPS of Examples 7 and 8. Examples 7 and 8 show the opposite trend of Examples 1 and 2 – a composition containing capped poly(arylene ether) actually retains less tensile strength after aging than a composition containing uncapped poly(arylene ether). Given the data of Examples 7 and 8 a skilled artisan would expect that the addition of other components such as reinforcing filler and flame retardant in combination with polysalicylate would result in worse retention of tensile strength after aging than comparable compositions without polysalicylate. In contrast to this expectation Examples 12-13 and Examples 15-16 unexpectedly show less loss of tensile strength than expected or no loss of tensile strength when compared to the relevant control example (Example 11 or Example 14). Thus the composition made by the method of the pending claims shows properties which are unexpectedly better than would be expected by the combination of White, Geprags, Adedeji and/or Jalbert.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

It is believed that the foregoing amendments and remarks fully comply with the Office Action and that the claims herein should now be allowable to Applicants. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance are requested.

If there are any additional charges with respect to this Amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 50-1131.

Respectfully submitted,

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